

**CITY OF FREEPORT
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 25, 2020**

1. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:39 pm in the Council Chambers of City Hall.

Council Members present: Amanda Green, Elizabeth Brannon, Mayor Russ Barley, Eddie Farris, Mark Martin, and Elizabeth Haffner.

Staff members present: Attorney Clay Adkinson, Planning Director Latilda Hughes-Neel, Finance Officer Sara Bowers, Billing Manager Deborah Roberts, Park Director/Project Manager Charlie Simmons, Sewer Supervisor Robert Fawcett, Water Supervisor Larry Tuggle, City Engineer Alex Rouchaleau and Planning Clerk Marge Gay.

Mayor Barley asked for a moment of silence for Brooke Jackson, Planning technician in the Planning & Zoning Department who had passed away unexpectedly the previous day.

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

The Invocation was given by Councilman Farris, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

3. State of the City Address by Mayor Russ Barley

Mayor Barley gave the State of the City Address (attached) and outlined the accomplishments of the previous year.

4. Recognition of Guests – none

5. Mark Staton-Water Bill Issue

Mark Staton requested an adjustment be made to his tenant's water bill as the leak has been fixed.

BOARD ACTION: Councilwoman Haffner motioned to adjust the July/August bill by 50% per city policy. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Bills
- b. Revenue/Expenditures Report through May
- c. Minutes from May 28, 2020 Regular Council Meeting

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d. Minutes from June 9, 2020 Regular Council Meeting

7. Public Comment on Consent Agenda - none

8. Approval of Consent Agenda

BOARD ACTION: Councilwoman Brannon motioned to approve the consent agenda as presented. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

9. Consideration of Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Director Neel: delete Church in Industrial/withdrawn

Director Neel: add Council Direction on Abandonment Request

Director Simmons: add Fuel Tank Protocol

10. Approval of Agenda with Additions/Deletions

BOARD ACTION: Councilman Farris motioned to approve the deletion and additions to the agenda. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes: motioned carried.

11. Staff Reports

a. Water -none

b. Sewer-none

c. Parks/Projects

i. Updates

Director Simmons updated the Council:

- Multi-purpose fields received top dressing. County loaned equipment
- Pool/splash pad open and being used
- Ribbon-cutting for new FRSC Trails and new concession stand
- Barrier Free Park property mowed
- Letter to BCC regarding Streets not in ILA (Interlocal Agreement)
- Franchise Agreement Meeting postponed to July

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- LaGrange Bayou Park – in discussions with BCC
- Hammock Bay Bridge – terms and repairs. Setting meeting with Hammock Bay.

ii. Fuel Tank Protocol

Director Simmons presented the Council with Fuel Tank Protocols as an informational item.

d. City Clerk – none

e. Finance

i. Budget Amendment

Officer Bowers requested a budget amendment to correct overage in the Parks Dept. Budget.

BOARD ACTION: Councilman Farris motioned to approve the Budget Amendment as presented. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

ii. Wastewater Treatment Plant Reconstruction/Expansion Project

Officer Bowers asked permission to use \$232,000 sewer impact fees to pay for the design of the new WWTP. The money will be reimbursed through the loan process.

BOARD ACTION: Councilwoman Green motioned to use sewer impact fees to pay for the WWTP design. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

f. Billing

i. Past due customer letter update from June 9 meeting

Manager Roberts gave an update on past-due account holder letters. Councilwoman Haffner asked if Roberts could reach out to account holders over 90 days past due.

ii. Bad Debt Write-offs

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Manager Roberts requested permission to write off 963 bad debts which go back to 2005.

BOARD ACTION: Councilman Farris motioned to write off the Bad Debt. Councilwoman Green seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

iii. Meter Upgrade Request Form

Manager Roberts represented the new form which covers the costs of upgrades.

BOARD ACTION: Councilwoman Haffner motioned to approve the new form. Councilman Farris seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

g. Planning

Director Neel presented the following items:

i. LSA-Bluffs at Lafayette Creek

Parcels 01-1S-19-23000-001-0000/02-1S-19-23000-001-0030

Acreage: 327.48

Current Future Land Use designation: County Large Scale

Agriculture/Estate Residential

Proposed Future Land Use: City Urban Development/Conservation

ii. RZ-Bluffs at Lafayette Creek

Parcels 36-1N-19-17000-001-0000/36-1N-19-17000-002-0000

From R-1 Low Density Residential and I-1 Light Industrial to C-2 Heavy Commercial, R-3 High Density Residential and CN Conservation

Parcels 01-1S-19-23000-001-0000/02-1S-19-23000-001-0030

From no zoning to C-2 Heavy Commercial, R-2 High Density Residential and CN Conservation.

Correspondence Received regarding the Amendment/Re-Zoning:

- Letter from CW Roberts, notifying developer of pre-existing development activity

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- Letter from Jack Kiger/Eglin requesting that the City deny the amendment/rezoning and adopt Eglin's Military Influence overlay District.

Planning Board Recommendation: Approval on 6/3/20

Project Agent Presentation: Matt Parker described the potential development of the property

Public Comment: Jack Kiger spoke with the Council about Eglin's mission.

BOARD ACTION: Councilwoman Green motioned to hold 1st Reading of the Ordinance to approve the LSA as presented. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

BOARD ACTION: Councilwoman Brannon motioned to hold 1st Reading of the ordinance to approve the Re-Zoning Request as presented. Councilwoman Green seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

BOARD ACTION: Councilman Farris motioned to transmit the draft LSA to DEO. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

iii. ~~Church in Industrial~~/ withdrawn

iv. COVID-19 Certification Form for Special Events, etc.

Director Neel presented the COVID 19 certification form that the Council had requested at the previous city council meeting.

BOARD ACTION: Councilwoman Brannon motioned to approve the form for use. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

v. Request to hold Citizen Board Meetings at City Hall with social distancing

Director Neel requested that the Planning & Development Review Board, the Recreation Board and the City Facilities Planning Committee be allowed to resume meeting in the Council Chambers utilizing social distancing protocols.

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BOARD ACTION: Councilman Farris motioned to allow the citizen boards to meet in City Hall using social distancing protocols. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

vi. Council Direction on Abandonment Request

Director Neel stated that the City had received an abandonment request regarding a portion of a roadway which would not deny access to adjacent property owners. She requested permission to contact the County, Waste Management, and other service entities. After information is received, the matter will come back to the Council with a request to set a public hearing.

BOARD ACTION: Councilwoman Haffner motioned to allow staff to contact the County and other service entities regarding the requested abandonment request. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. Council vote: Green/nay, Brannon/aye, Farris/aye, Martin/aye, Haffner/aye. 4:1, motion carried.

h. Legal – none

i. Engineering

i. Updates

Engineer Rouchaleau updated the Council on the status of E Bay Loop Water Main Project.

12. Old Business

a. City Manager

- Mayor Barley announced that Andrew Hyatt had declined the City's City Manager position.
- Councilman Farris stated that the City needs an Interim City Manager; Charlie is doing the job; would like to wait until after the Budget to go through the hiring process again.
- Councilman Martin: no wiggle room under your current ordinance per Clay. And Charlie doesn't live in the City.
- Councilman Farris: Charlie would be a great City Manager. We need to repeal that ordinance. Not ready to go through that process again.

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- Councilwoman Brannon: I completely agree with Councilman Farris. Charlie is doing the job. We need to repeal that ordinance.
- Councilwoman Green: no comment

BOARD ACTION: Councilman Farris made a motion to repeal the city manager ordinance. Councilman Martin seconded the motion.

Discussion:

- Councilwoman Green: completely taken by surprise; not prepared to make this decision.
- Attorney Adkinson: If the motion is defeated, the only one who can bring it back up for discussion is whoever voted against it.

BOARD ACTION: Councilman Farris withdrew his motion. Councilman Martin withdrew his second.

Discussion:

- Councilman Farris: we will discuss this at our next meeting
- Councilwoman Green: we need to rethink our process; it was skewed with multiple issues
- Councilwoman Haffner: the process was not normal
- Director Simmons: as Ms. Green has stated it took a long time to get the city manager ordinance. Do not throw it out. Amend it.
- Mayor Barley: I don't understand what was wrong with the process.
- Councilwoman Haffner: we should not have interviewed so many applicants, among other things. One thing is sure; we need to be staffed now.
- Councilwoman Green: agreed.

b. City Clerk

Director Neel stated that the Council's most pressing concern is to get a City Clerk hired. Staff (Neel and Simmons) has reviewed the applications received and there are three of the applicants recommended by the Mayor which have skills which should translate into an efficient city clerk. Those applications were forwarded to the Council for review last week at Director Simmons's request.

Discussion:

- Councilwoman Haffner: want to interview Robinson

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- Councilwoman Brannon: agree.
- Attorney Adkinson: set a Special Meeting to interview all three

BOARD ACTION: Councilman Farris motioned to set a special meeting on July 7, 2020 at 6:00 pm to interview the three top candidates. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

Director Neel will e-mail the city clerk interview questions to the Council so that they can contact her with any corrections/modifications.

Mayor Barley will contact all three applicants for the interviews.

c. Employee Education Contracts

Director Neel presented an example of an educational reimbursement plan. She asked Council to review the example plan. Neel will develop a plan similar but tailored to Freeport.

d. Pending List

Director Neel presented the current Pending List. She suggested removing the following items, due to having been completed or discarded:

- Billing Manager/Bad Debt Write-Offs
- Project Manager/City Fuel Tanks
- City Manager/Review of City Clerk Job Description

Director Neel suggested adding Planning Director/Education Reimbursement Program.

BOARD ACTION: Councilwoman Haffner motioned to update the Pending List as presented by Neel. Councilwoman Brannon seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

13. New Business

a. Mayor Russ Barley

i. City Digital Sign at Highway 20

Mayor Barley stated that the LED Sign in front of City Hall needs to be updated. He provided the Council with the best price quote received: \$21,307.00. Attorney Adkinson stated that since the work would be more than \$20,000, the work would have to be bid out.

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BOARD ACTION: Councilman Farris motioned to authorize the Mayor and Finance Officer to come up with a formal bid package for the sign. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

b. Councilwoman Brannon

i. Planning Board Appointment

Councilwoman Brannon announced that her Planning Board Appointment had resigned and that she wished to appoint Kyler Clark, owner of Freeport Auto Parts to the Planning & Development Review Board.

BOARD ACTION: Councilwoman Brannon motioned to appoint Kyler Clark to the Planning & Development Review Board. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

c. Councilman Farris - none

d. Councilwoman Green

i. Set Workshop to discuss Blight within City

BOARD ACTION: Councilwoman Green motioned to set a workshop to discuss "Blight" on Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 5:30 pm. Councilwoman Haffner seconded the motion. All ayes: motion carried.

ii. Surplus Out-dated I-Pads

Councilwoman Green stated that there were multiple outdated I-Pads in the Clerk's Office which no one uses which should be surplus. She noted that some of them are still passcode protected and could not even be opened. Attorney Adkinson volunteered to assist staff in opening the locked I-Pads.

e. Councilwoman Haffner – none

f. Councilman Martin – none

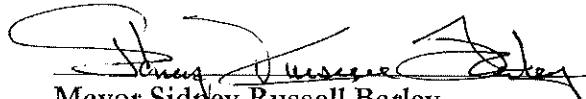
14. Public Comment - none

15. Adjournment

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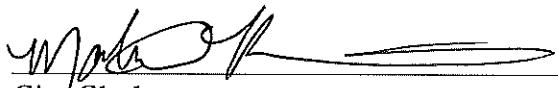
BOARD ACTION: Mayor Barley called for a motion to adjourn. Councilman Martin motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:38pm.

FREEPORT CITY COUNCIL



Mayor Sidney Russell Barley

ATTEST:



City Clerk